**“The Publishing House in London and the Sunday Law” The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald 72, 49.**

E. J. Waggoner

Several brief notices of the Sunday trials in London have appeared in the Review, but rarely more than enough to let the readers know that there have been such trials, and that fines have been inflicted. Of the nature of the law and of the merits of the case, nothing has been said, and it has occurred to me that our brethren in America would be interested to know the exact situation. {ARSH December 3, 1895, p. 777.1}

There are some three dozen different Sunday laws on the statute-books in England, but the one that we are concerned with at present is an act of Parliament relating to factories. This act prescribes the hours of labor, tells how long employees may be allowed to work continuously, fixes the hours of meals, regulates the sanitary arrangement of workshops, and provides for the guarding of all machinery, so that no one can be endangered thereby. The one item over which there is controversy in our case is the following:— {ARSH December 3, 1895, p. 777.2}

“A child, young person, or woman may not be employed on Sundays.” {ARSH December 3, 1895, p. 777.3}

A “child” is defined by the act to be a person over ten and under fourteen yearn of age. “Young person” means a person of either sex who is over fourteen but under eighteen years of age. A woman is a female over eighteen. {ARSH December 3, 1895, p. 777.4}

Although a very large publishing work is carried on by the Tract Society, in London, the printing work is comparatively small, since all the huge subscription books are manufactured by outside firms. Only the *Present Truth*, tracts, pamphlets, and some small books are done in our own office. Consequently our working force is smaller than are most of our other offices. In the list of employees are a few women and one “young person,” who do the class of work that is commonly done by such persons in all printing-offices. As a matter of course, we work six days and rest the seventh day, according to the commandment. {ARSH December 3, 1895, p. 777.5}

This state of things existed from the beginning of the work here, and although factory inspectors had visited the office at intervals, and were informed that work was done on Sundays the same as on other working days, there was no interference with the work until a little over a year ago. At that time the authorities seemed suddenly to be seized with a new energy. They indicated several changes which must be made in the arrangement of machinery. They pointed out that we were unconsciously violating the law in allowing employees who lived at a distance to bring their lunch and eat it on the premises. Some other details were indicated, in which changes must be made, all of which were promptly complied with. {ARSH December 3, 1895, p. 777.6}

At the same time they said that women and young persons most stop working on Sundays. It was set before the visiting inspector that we were fully complying with the spirit of the Factory Act as to protection of employees, and the number of hours of labor, and he let the matter go until he could confer with his superiors. As the result of this, we were told that the Jews were exempt from the Sunday clause of the act, and that if we would fill out one of the regular blanks, stating that we were Jews, Sunday work could go on as before. Of course this could not be done, as we could not deny that we are Christians. {ARSH December 3, 1895, p. 778.1}

The decision, however, not to yield to the requirement of the Sunday clause of the Factory Act, was not hastily made. For several weeks it was complied with, along with the other requirements. The women were told not to come to work on Sundays. But the inconsistency of such a course in those who are teaching the third angel’s message became more and more apparent, until finally, after careful deliberation, it was decided that no difference could be made between Sunday and the other working days of the week. Accordingly, work was resumed on Sundays as usual, and the prosecutions and fines, of which you have heard, have resulted. At the present writing the third fine has been imposed, and the warrants for collecting it by distress have been issued, but not yet served. The present fine is forty-two pounds (£205) and costs. {ARSH December 3, 1895, p. 778.2}

Now for a brief statement of the reasons which led to the above-mentioned decision:— {ARSH December 3, 1895, p. 778.3}

At first, as already stated, the thought that it was only a Factory Act, and that it did not require absolute nor universal rest, caused us to think that the Sunday clause could be complied with as well as any of the other clauses. Careful thought upon the matter, however, led to the following conclusions. The fourth commandment requires the sanctification of the seventh day; that is, that it must be distinguished from all the other days of the week, by resting upon it, and habitual working upon them. This law knows no respect of persons. It speaks to women and to young persons as well as to men. {ARSH December 3, 1895, p. 778.4}

Further, the message of the third angel of Revelation 14 sounds a warning against receiving the mark of the beast in the forehead or in the hand. This message includes all,-men, women, and children. The sin of receiving the mark, or of enforcing it, is without distinction of persons. This being the case, the managers of the office did not see how they could conscientiously comply with a law which required any person to cease work on Sunday for no other reason than that it was Sunday. For let it be understood that the requirement is not simply to guard women and young persons from overwork. If they were employed but two days in the week, and but two hours a day, and one of those days was Sunday, prosecution would follow just the same. {ARSH December 3, 1895, p. 778.5}

The suggestion that the authorities in making the law had no idea that it would interfere with any one’s religion, is controverted by the fact that they exempted the Jews from its provisions, and that we might be exempt if we would deny that we are Christians. But it is a matter of no importance to us what their intentions were. We are to be guided by what the Bible says, and not by the intentions of the lawmakers; by our knowledge of truth, and not by their ignorance of it. When the Bible declares that it is a sin to recognize Sunday as entitled to any consideration above other days, we must not bow down to it, no matter what other people may think about it. To worship a child’s doll is as sinful as to worship a Chinese joss. The fact that one was not made with religious intent and the other was, makes no difference in the act. If we were living in ancient Spartan days, when stealing was counted a virtue and an act of patriotism, we should not be justified in stealing any more than if it were required as an act of defiance against God. {ARSH December 3, 1895, p. 778.6}

Men may not know what they are about when they introduce Sunday into their legislation, but the Devil knows very well, and thanks to the Lord, “we are not ignorant of his devices.” We know that he is the head of the papacy, and that if the papacy had not under his leading substituted Sunday for the Sabbath of the Lord, no mention of Sunday more than any other day would be made in the laws of States. If, when we know these facts, we do not do all we can to let the world know them, we are guilty before God. People are in danger of being destroyed for lack of knowledge. It is our business to show the civil authorities that in exalting Sunday to any degree above other days, they are following the lead of the papacy, and that every Sunday statute is an act of defiance against the authority of God. We must not expect that the great deceiver will label all his acts, so that everybody may see their origin. {ARSH December 3, 1895, p. 778.7}

This affords sufficient answer to the exhortation to suffer injustice and inconvenience rather than have any trouble with the authorities. If it were simply a question of inconvenience, or of suffering injustice, we should be guilty of resisting the ordinance of God if we made any resistance. But it is not. God is the highest authority, and Christ is the Master of all. In all our service to men we must do it “as unto the Lord.” If men lay unjust burdens upon as, we must be patient “unto the coming of the Lord.” The characteristic of “the just” is that they do not resist oppression. James 5:6, 7. But neither do they sin against God. They may obey unjust demands, but not sinful ones. {ARSH December 3, 1895, p. 778.8}

A little note that appeared in the REVIEW a few weeks ago, stating that the brethren in London did not claim that there had been any religions persecution, seemed calculated to mislead some as to the exact condition of things. It is true that we have carefully avoided any reference to “persecution.” We have done this because we did not wish to obscure the real issue. Whether or not we are persecuted is a small matter compared with the fact that men are defying God and not realizing that they are doing a fearful thing. Our rights are nothing compared with the rights of God. He has a right not only to our service, but to the service of all men, including governors and kings. Our sole business on earth is as ambassadors to secure these rights to him as far as possible. It is very pleasant to have people sympathize with us, but it is far more desirable to have them perceive how they are wronging God and their own souls. So although we regard this question as purely a religious one, we have said nothing about persecution. Our desire is that people may see that the case is not between us and the State, but between the State and God. The one thing that the people of earth need to learn is that the law of God is paramount to customs or even laws of men. We must let the authorities know that it is as much a sin for them to make and enforce Sunday laws, as for us to keep them. {ARSH December 3, 1895, p. 778.9}

One more important feature of this case should be added to the foregoing. It is this: that amendments to the Factory Act are continually being made in response to the demands of the labor unions. At the last session of Parliament some additions were made. The Trades Union Congress, which met last September, instructed its Parliamentary committee, some of whom are members of Parliament, to “draw up a bill, and secure its being introduced into Parliament, prohibiting manufacturing processes being carried on from Saturday noon to Monday morning.” {ARSH December 3, 1895, p. 778.10}

This, it will be seen, is designed to stop all labor in factories, by men as well as by women. The probabilities are that it will be passed, since the tendency of the times is in that direction. In connection with that, another amendment is to be introduced, prohibiting employers from sending work out to be done in the homes of employees. If these proposed bills become law, the result will be that no manufacturing operations at all will be allowed Sunday. {ARSH December 3, 1895, p. 778.11}

Now it needs but a superficial acquaintance with the “demands of labor,” to see what step must inevitably follow this legislation. If all factory operations are forbidden on Sunday, whether in factories or in private houses, a cry of “unfair competition” will be raised if other people are allowed to work on their own account. Therefore, the next step must be the forbidding of all work on Sundays, and all “for the good of the people.” It thus appears that this present Sunday clause in the Factory Act is but the thin end of the wedge. If we comply with the requirement of this, because it is “only a Factory Act,” where shall we stop short of absolute rest on Sunday? {ARSH December 3, 1895, p. 778.12}

No doubt there will be exceptions even to such a law, so that the street-cars will run as usual, and milk and some other things will be allowed to be sold. But if we may comply with a Sunday law that makes no religious claim, and is not absolutely universal in its demands, what objection can we raise against Constantine’s famous Sunday law! There is more in this matter than appears on the surface; but for what purpose does God make known to us the deep things of his law if it is not that we may discern the deep plots of Satan? {ARSH December 3, 1895, p. 778.13}

These are the facts in the case, and the principles upon which we here met them. We have not dared to plead our convenience, our belief or religious principles, or our conscience, as against the law, but only the law of God, which speaks to all men as well as to us. The results of the agitation, as far as we can see, has been for the furtherance of the truth. As a direct result, more people in the United Kingdom have learned of the truth within the past year than in all the previous years that work has been carried on. Not a few have begun to keep the Sabbath, and many are trembling over the decision. As to what steps should be taken in for the future, we pray the Lord to direct, and we ask the prayers of the brethren to the same end. {ARSH December 3, 1895, p. 778.14}

E. J. WAGGONER.

**“The Prosecution in London” The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald 72, 51.**

E. J. Waggoner

The communication given below was sent by the directors of the International Tract Society in London to the Home Secretary. This officer has charge of the administration of Sunday laws. We copy from the *Present Truth:*— {ARSH December 17, 1895, p. 812.1}

“The Board of Directors of the International Tract Society, Limited, beg respectfully that you will allow them to call your attention to the following facts, showing the operation of the Sunday clause in the Factory Act in the case of our printing works, situated at 451, Holloway Road, N. {ARSH December 17, 1895, p. 812.2}

“By the seizure of machinery and materials to satisfy fines imposed for allowing certain women and young persons to work on Sunday we are compelled to close the factory. {ARSH December 17, 1895, p. 812.3}

“For six years in our present factory our work was allowed to proceed without interference. Visiting Inspectors recognized the fact that the spirit of the Act was complied with, and that the violation was only technical. We being observers of the seventh day of the week, and all our employees being of like faith, our works have been entirely closed on the Sabbath, and opened on Sunday. {ARSH December 17, 1895, p. 812.4}

“Further, had we been able conscientiously to sign the Jewish exemption form we might have continued without interference. But we are Christians-the International Tract Society, Limited being one of the publishing branches of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination-and cannot truthfully enter ourselves as Jews under the Act thus the administration of the law discriminates against us as Christians, forbidding that which would be allowed us did we falsely declare ourselves Jews. {ARSH December 17, 1895, p. 812.5}

“We have not been contending for our rights nor for our convenience in doing business. But God’s right to our obedience to the Fourth Commandment is not ours to surrender, nor can we obey that commandment to keep the Sabbath holy and at the same time keep the Sunday,-an institution established by human authority in opposition to the Sabbath,-even as we could not serve God and at the same time recognize other gods. In effect the law has sought to compel us to recognize a religious institution which loyalty to the Law of God requires that we should not observe. {ARSH December 17, 1895, p. 812.6}

“We acknowledge the uniform courtesy of Her Majesty’s Inspectors who have taken this new departure regarding our relation to the Factory Act, but we have felt it not disrespectful to address you this note of remonstrance against the action of the law by which the work of our factory is stopped and our factory employees deprived of this means of earning a livelihood. In the Act these are named as ‘protected persons,’ but by the operation of the Act they have been shut out from their work. {ARSH December 17, 1895, p. 812.7}

“We respectfully submit that this is an injustice not contemplated by the framers of the Act.” {ARSH December 17, 1895, p. 812.8}

The *Star*, a prominent London paper, has the following to say on the case:— {ARSH December 17, 1895, p. 812.9}

“The *Present Truth* is the organ of the International Tract Society, Limited, which is one of the publishing branches of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, which holds that the true Sabbath is Saturday, the seventh day of the week, and not Sunday, the first. The *Present Truth* people, therefore, rest on Saturday and work on Sunday. Now the Factory Act forbids the employment of women and young persons on Sunday, and the only exemption which is dispenses is in the case of the Jews, who are passed over if they sign a special exemption form. The *Present Truth* conscientiously objected to signing this Jewish exemption form, because it is Christian and not Jewish, and for six years the factory inspectors let it print in peace, recognizing the patent fact that it kept the law in spirit if not in letter. The other day, however, some new broom came along, and swept the *Present Truth* before a magistrate who fined it. it having refused to pay the fines, the bailiffs descended on it, confiscated all they could lay their hands on, including the engine, wherefore the *Present Truth* is likely soon to be the *Past Truth*. This is about the savagest instance we ever saw of the injustice of justice, and we hope that Sir Matthew White Ridley will make restitution as swiftly as may be.” {ARSH December 17, 1895, p. 812.10}